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July 22, 2013

TheBestSchools.Org Honors Gardner-Webb University at Number 15

BOILING SPRINGS, N.C. – Gardner–Webb University was named to the Top 20 List of online Christian colleges by TheBestSchools.org (TBS), an organization that researches colleges and universities across the country. GWU was ranked 15th among the nation’s Christian colleges who also offer online degree options, beating out other notable programs such as Abilene Christian University (Abilene, Texas) and Charleston Southern University (Charleston, S.C.), among others.

TheBestSchools.org examines a wide range of criteria as it compiles its lists of favorites each year. According to TBS, telling signs of a good candidate online Christian college include full accreditation, low student-to-teacher ratio (less than 20:1), confessional status (i.e., teachers/students are required to sign a Christian doctrinal statement), “anytime access” lecture archives, around-the-clock technical support, affordability, variety of degree options, 100% online degree programs, and other factors.

Dr. Ben Leslie is provost and executive vice president at Gardner-Webb. He believes the distinction represents an intentional effort to maximize the University’s online offerings. “Gardner-Webb University has had a presence in the world of online higher education for over a decade,” Leslie shared. “It has been our mission to design online programs that challenge students intellectually, prepare them professionally, and that also nurture them spiritually. Inclusion in the list of the top 20 Christian Online Colleges is a deeply gratifying endorsement that helps confirm our hope and belief that we are indeed accomplishing that mission.”

The list of online Christian colleges is gathered from multiple sites, including *U.S. News & World Report*, *Forbes*, OnlineChristianColleges, Christian Colleges.com, Onlineeducation.net, and Best and Worst Online Degree Providers. Officials say the Christian colleges grading criteria revolve around three components: (1) the Christian character of the school; (2) academic prestige; and, of course, (3) the extent and quality of their online programs.

Liberty University (Lynchburg, Va.) was named number-one in the category; while Regent University (Virginia Beach, Va.), Colorado Christian University (Lakewood, Colo.), LaTourneau University (Longview, Texas), and California Baptist University (Riverside, Calif.) rounded out the top five.

TheBestSchools.org is an independent organization with no ties to any other educational institution. Editors have extensive experience in teaching, research, and publishing at the university level. More information is available online at TheBestSchools.org.

Located in Boiling Springs, N.C., Gardner-Webb University's purpose is to advance the Kingdom of God through Christian higher education by preparing graduates for professional and personal success, instilling in them a deep commitment to service and leadership, and equipping them for well-rounded lives of lasting impact, Pro Deo et Humanitate (For God and Humanity).